

Testimony Provided on Behalf of the Michigan Psychological Association in Opposition to Adoption of House Bill 4936

My name is Dr. William Bloom. I am a licensed psychologist. I am here representing the Michigan Psychological Association, a professional association comprised of over 700 psychologists throughout the State of Michigan. The Michigan Psychological Association is strongly committed to a fiscally sound state which develops health care policy based on scientifically validated diagnosis and treatment practices. Psychologists enter the acute and post-acute trauma teams for motor vehicle accident trauma victims at a number of junctures. Neuropsychology, a specialty practice within Psychology is the most commonly used diagnostic system for brain injury worldwide. It is also one of the most refined and studied scientific disciplines in existence. Entering "Neuropsychology" as a Google Scholar search term returns approximately 446,000 entries. Currently minted Neuropsychologists typically have five years graduate training, a one year Internship and up to two more years in post-doctoral fellowship training. It is a rigorous, evidenced based Psychology specialty practice which provides a level of expertise in motor vehicle trauma cases which is unique and valued.

Neuropsychologists provide diagnostic data which the trauma team uses to determine medical necessity for treatment and to provide objective data to monitor progress and improvement. Neuropsychologists and clinical psychologists are involved in treatment and recovery practices, as well. Post traumatic stress disorder, behavioral and emotional disorders secondary to trauma and/or brain injury, school and community re-entry services, grief counseling, and family counseling are just some of the restorative therapies involving Neuropsychologists and clinical psychologists. I would add that Neuropsychologists and general clinical psychologists are professionally bound to provide evidence based and scientifically validated practices. Psychologists routinely contribute to the science of trauma diagnosis and treatment. The loss of these professionals to motor vehicle accident trauma victims would be a catastrophic loss to the citizens of Michigan.

When a legislative body tinkers with health care payment streams, even with good intentions, a set of dominos is set into motion affecting not only payment streams but also general and specific changes in the health care delivery system, in effect, the way we provide care to motor vehicle accident trauma victims. The Michigan Psychological Association believes that reducing PIP benefits will dramatically alter motor vehicle accident trauma victims' access to the specialty practice of Neuropsychology and clinical psychology. The Michigan Psychological Association further believes that doing so will impede science based decision making of the trauma team and lead to greater diagnostic and treatment errors. The team will have less science behind the decision making process.

Current Michigan statute disallows Psychologists in private practice from participation in the Medicaid program. Medical Centers and teaching hospitals are the main employers of Neuropsychologists allowed to see Medicaid patients. As auto insurance companies reduce their payments for accident related medical treatment, greater numbers of motor vehicle accident trauma victims who have become Medicaid patients will be funneled to Medicaid providers. These individuals will need diagnosis and treatment from just a small number of neuropsychologists statewide. Michigan citizens in counties without Medical Centers employing Neuropsychologists will have no access to this type of specialty care. **The Michigan Psychological Association strongly encourages this legislative body to conduct health care delivery impact studies prior to any changes in the auto no-fault law.** Employment patterns for neuropsychologists will need to adjust, with greater emphasis on hiring in publically funded health care

settings. Are those settings able to hire greater numbers of highly skilled doctoral level psychologists? Historically, the numbers of neuropsychologists in those settings have been reduced.

In addition to impacts on the health care delivery system, the Michigan Psychological Association recognizes potential impacts in other publically funded service arenas in which psychologists work. Special Education departments, Community Mental Health, and Michigan Rehabilitation Services all depend heavily on auto no-fault benefits to provide medically necessary treatment which lessens their burden. As motor vehicle accident trauma victims move towards publically funded services, greater demands for special education, mental health services, and rehabilitation services will fall into public hands. **The Michigan Psychological Association strongly encourages this legislative body to conduct impact studies on availability of services in Special Education, Community Mental Health, and Rehabilitation Services prior to any changes in the auto no-fault law.** This is necessary to ensure that motor vehicle accident trauma victims have adequate access to services as they move from an auto no-fault payment system to a publically funded payment stream.

The Michigan Psychological Association supports the activities of this legislative body to provide affordable auto insurance to all citizens. However, making such changes without studying the domino effects to the health care delivery system or to Special Education, Community Mental Health, and Rehabilitation Services places Michigan citizens' health in peril. The Michigan Psychological Association has many willing volunteer members who would be happy to share their expertise in motor vehicle accident trauma victims' diagnosis and treatment so that this committee can fully appreciate the issues I raise. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,



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Michigan Psychological Association